

Committees and Advisory Structure

The Early Childhood Contact (ECC) is the early childhood leader at the Intermediate School District (ISD), facilitating an ISD-wide plan with a vision to improve child outcomes, to minimize achievement gaps and help all stakeholders to see the “big picture” of how the Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) strategically fits into the local Great Start Collaborative (GSC) early childhood efforts. Data are used to guide program improvement, monitor and support change elements, and share program quality information with parents, the ISD, and the community.

GSRP Data Analysis Team

The Early Childhood Specialist (ECS) assembles and leads a data analysis team made up of lead and associate teachers (or representatives of those groups in a large program), the program supervisor, parents, and other relevant personnel such as specialists and stakeholders. A systematic approach brings the team together three times each program year. The team analyzes program data including OnlinePQA reports and ongoing child assessment results. The team sets and monitors goals for the continuous quality improvement of the program.

Program quality data from the Preschool Program Quality Assessment (PQA) and child outcome data from child screening and assessment are aggregated and provided to the data analysis team in advance. Data sets should be prepared for the meeting in a reader-friendly format such as bar graphs, and without identifying features such as child names. During the end-of-year meeting, the team:

- Identifies the current level of performance across relevant indicators, evident strengths, and extraordinary accommodations for children/families (e.g., attendance rates, program settings and/or options, language groups, child, family or community risk factors);
- Uses data to establish professional development priorities;
- Sets measurable goals and objectives to address classroom quality (Form A), agency quality (Form B), and child outcomes;
- Agrees to eliminate what is not effective, for example, strategies which resulted in PQA scores of three or less;
- Addresses whether policies and procedures require revision; and
- Inventories available program resources such as time, money, personnel, technology, curriculum resources, and local training opportunities.

The data analysis team reports program results to the local GSRP Advisory Committee, school or agency board, and the public. Information relating to both the status of meeting the current year’s goals and the goals set for the following year should be shared with local advisory committee, parents, staff, administration, and the school board.

GSRP Parent Advisory Committee

Legislation requires each GSRP site to provide for active and continuous participation of parents of enrolled children. Keeping in mind that those most in need of quality public education feel less well-served by the system, the ECC will champion parents as active decision makers in GSRP, ensuring annual training that instills confidence in parents as active members. ISD administrative policies must address design and monitoring of GSRP advisory groups.

The ISD ensures that programs have a local GSRP parent advisory committee with a focus on local considerations, including recruitment/enrollment, PQA results and child outcome data. This committee minimally meets twice each program year. The committee has one parent representative for every 18 children enrolled in the program, with a minimum of two parents or guardians. The local GSRP parent advisory committee also has representation from the GSRP teaching staff and support of other GSRP administration.

Each ISD is also required to have GSRP parent representation on the regional Great Start Collaborative Parent Coalition (GSPC), working with other committed parents to support early childhood practices in the community. These GSRP parents, in turn, act as liaisons to local GSRP Advisory Committees, sharing ideas and activities in person, virtually (e.g., Skype) or through emailed reports.

School Readiness Advisory Committee

The ECC is a leader in the ISD-wide school readiness advisory committee, established annually and which operates as a workgroup of the local GSC. One of the tasks of the school readiness advisory committee is to annually review and make recommendations about:

- Collaboration with and involvement of community volunteer and/or social service organizations in addressing all aspects of educational disadvantage;
- Partnership with the local GSC, Regional Resource Center, and others to build the capacity of local community agencies to take part in GSRP;
- Collaborative recruitment and enrollment process to assure that each child is enrolled in the program most appropriate to his or her needs and to maximize the use of federal, state, and local funds;
- The choice of an approved curriculum;

- Nutritional services utilizing federal, state and local food program support as applicable;
- Health and developmental screening process;
- Referrals to community social service agencies, as appropriate;
- Parent involvement;
- PQA and Child Outcome data;
- Continuous improvement efforts, and
- Transition into kindergarten.

32p Considerations

Beginning in October of 2013 the GSC, under section 32p of State School Aid, PA 60 of 2013, were required to convene a workgroup to serve as a school readiness advisory committee as required under section 32d and discuss the structure and strategies as part of their work plan and application. For FY15, the language regarding the school readiness advisory committee has changed slightly, but continues as a work group of the GSC, as presented under sections 32d and 32p of PA 196 of 2014.

- Section 32p provides funding to ISDs or a consortium of ISDs to convene a local GSC and GSPC. The goal of the local GSC and GSPC is to ensure the coordination and expansion of local early childhood infrastructure and programs that allow every child in the community to achieve the four early childhood outcomes. Each GSC is to convene workgroups to make recommendations about community services designed to achieve the early childhood outcomes and to ensure its local Great Start System includes supports for children birth through age 8.
- Section 32p also outlines the supports for children birth through age 8 included in each local Great Start system: (a) Physical Health, (b) Social-emotional health, (c) Family Supports and basic needs, (d) Parent Education and child advocacy, and (e) Early education and care.

The school readiness advisory committee is expected to be focused on school readiness in a broad sense throughout the local Great Start system, not overwhelmingly focused on GSRP. Use and build upon the school readiness advisory committee structure that already exists. As long as an existing advisory committee includes the required members and addresses the required components, there is no need to make changes. Some existing advisory committees may need to reformulate membership, or convene a sub-workgroup to address the topics required for GSRP as part of the school readiness committee requirement.

Adapted from the following sections of the GSRP Implementation Manual: ISD Administration of GSRP, Early Childhood Specialist, Parent Involvement, and Program Evaluation and 32p guidance.